

interpretation of moral principles must alter with them. Few who consider dispassionately the facts of social history will be disposed to deny that the exploitation of the weak by the powerful, organized for purposes of economic gain, buttressed by imposing systems of law, and screened by decorous draperies of virtuous sentiment and resounding rhetoric, has been a permanent feature in the life of most communities that the world has yet seen. But the quality in modern societies, which is most sharply opposed to the teaching ascribed to the Founder of the Christian Faith, lies deeper than the exceptional failures and abnormal follies against which criticism is most commonly directed. It consists in the assumption, accepted by most reformers with hardly less *navvett* than by the defenders of the established order, that the attainment of material riches is the supreme object of human endeavour and the final criterion of human success. Such a philosophy, plausible, militant, and not indisposed, when hard pressed, to silence criticism by persecution, may triumph or may decline. What is certain is that it is the negation of any system of thought or morals which can, except by a metaphor, be described as Christian. Compromise is as impossible between the Church of Christ and the idolatry of wealth, which is the practical religion of capitalist societies, as it was between the Church and the State idolatry of the

Roman Empire.
" Modern capitalism/' writes Mr. Keynes, " is
ab-
solutely irreligious, without internal union,
without
much public spirit, often, though not always,
a mere
congeries of possessors and pursuers." It is
that whole
system of appetites and values, with its
deification of
the life of snatching to hoard, and hoarding
to snatch,
which now, in the hour of its triumph, while
the plaudits
of the crowd still ring in the ears of the
gladiators and
the laurels are still unfaded on their brows,
seems
sometimes to leave a taste as of ashes on the
lips of a
civilization which has brought to the
conquest of its
material environment resources unknown in
earlier ages,